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United Nations Forum on Forests

Report on the fourth session (6 June 2003 and 3 to 14 May 2004)

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Summary

The United Nations Forum on Forests held its fourth session in Geneva from 3 to 14 May 2004. The Forum adopted policy resolutions on the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action relating to: (a) forest-related scientific knowledge; (b) social and cultural aspects of forests; and (c) forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting; criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. The Forum also took decisions on the report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies and on the process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, which will be held at it its fifth session.

During its fourth session, the Forum also held an interactive multi-stakeholder dialogue among the major groups, government delegations and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on (a) social and cultural aspects of forests; (b) traditional forest-related knowledge; (c) capacity-building; and (d) partnerships. The Forum also organized three panel discussions, one on the role of forests in achieving broader development goals and two with a regional focus on Africa and the Small Island Developing States.

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its fourth session and provisional agenda for its fifth session

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its fourth session;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Forum as set out below.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

   Documentation

   Provisional agenda and annotations
3. Status of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

   Documentation

   Note by the Secretariat
4. Review of progress and consideration of future actions.

   Documentation

   Report of the Secretary-General
5. Review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, as referred to in paragraph 17 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35.

   Documentation

   Report of the Secretary-General
6. On the basis of the assessment referred to in paragraph 2(e) of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, consideration of the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests with a view to recommending them to the Council and through it to the General Assembly.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests

7. Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat

Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework, 2005

8. Multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat transmitting discussion papers submitted by major groups

9. High-level ministerial segment and policy dialogue with heads of organizations participating in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

Note by the Secretariat on linkages between forests and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

10. Other matters.

11. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fifth session.

B. Resolutions of the Forum brought to the attention of the Council

2. The following resolutions adopted by the Forum are brought to the attention of the Council:

Resolution 4/1
Forest-related scientific knowledge

The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Taking note of the views exchanged by countries as well as major groups at its fourth session on the status of countries' efforts to implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action related to forest-related scientific knowledge, which identified progress, obstacles and lessons learned,

Highlighting a number of lessons learned through the exchange of country experience, namely, that (a) science has significantly enhanced knowledge about issues addressed in the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental

Forum on Forests proposals for action, that (b) in spite of progress made, experience shows that exchange and dissemination of forest-related scientific knowledge and strengthening the interaction between science and policy can increase the use of forest-related scientific knowledge in decision-making, that (c) experience has also shown that the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of forest-related scientific research can enhance the relevance and extension of research to the stakeholders, that (d) public funding for forest research has been on the decline, which has limited the contribution of forest science to the advancement of sustainable forest management, especially in developing countries, and that (e) the strengthening of regional forest research networks has enhanced capacity-building, cooperation and the promotion of regional research priorities,

1. *Encourages* countries to highlight the essential role of science and research in sustainable forest management and incorporate, as appropriate, research strategies and programmes into national forest programmes or equivalent programmes;

2. *Encourages* countries, within their capacities, to strengthen linkages between science and policy by enhancing the capacities of research organizations, institutions and scientists, in particular in developing countries;

3. *Requests* the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to facilitate joint action to further improve linkages and to improve communication and networking between scientific, forest policy and civil society entities;

4. *Calls upon* the donor community, international organizations and financial institutions to enhance the capacity of research organizations in developing countries in generating and accessing forest-related data and information, including through information and communication technologies infrastructure, strengthening the skills of researchers and supporting networking activities;

5. *Encourages* countries and regional organizations and processes to support regional and subregional forest research networks with the objective of capacity-building, research cooperation and the promotion of regional research priorities;

6. *Encourages* international and regional organizations, institutions and processes, with the involvement of various stakeholders, to promote and support integrated and interdisciplinary research on forest-related issues of importance at the national and global levels, both within and between national and international research organizations and institutions to enhance sustainable forest management and promote conservation and sustainable use of forest resources;

7. *Encourages* Partnership members, countries, international organizations and financial institutions to support initiatives promoting the integration of scientific research and national forest programmes, policies or strategies, noting the strengths of many Partnership members involved in scientific research and existing programmes, inter alia, in the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Center for International Forestry Research and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry;

8. *Invites* countries and the members of the Partnership to support short- and medium-term exchanges of scientists between developed and developing countries in the context of sustainable forest management-related research;

9. *Encourages* countries to promote partnerships and participation of relevant stakeholders in the formulation of research programmes at the national and local levels;

10. *Encourages* research organizations to provide for the timely and effective communication of the outcomes of forest-related scientific research;

11. *Calls upon* donors and the international community to support developing countries with financial and technical support and capacity-building for forest-related scientific research within the priorities identified by developing countries in their national forest programmes or equivalent programmes;

12. *Encourages* countries to promote the role of private-sector investment in scientific research related to sustainable forest management, consistent with countries' international obligations;

13. *Encourages* countries to promote forest-related scientific research that is based on the needs and priorities of its users and in that context invites countries to consider the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, in forest-related research;

14. *Encourages* donors to facilitate the availability of forest-related scientific research results to developing countries in an effective manner;

15. *Urges* countries, within their capacities, to recognize the importance of forestry education and research for achieving sustainable forest management, and calls upon countries, within their capacities, to enhance forestry education and research capacity;

16. *Encourages* the Partnership, to the extent possible within its mandate, to provide information, as requested, on scientific, technical and technological aspects of sustainable forest management.

Resolution 4/2
Social and cultural aspects of forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Taking note of the views exchanged by countries and major groups at its fourth session on the status of countries' efforts to implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action related to social and cultural aspects of forests, which identified progress, obstacles and lessons learned,

Highlighting a number of lessons learned through the exchange of country experience, namely, that (a) social and cultural aspects of forests are important and contribute to the implementation of sustainable forest management, that (b) the role of forests in poverty eradication and sustainable development as recognized in the internationally agreed development goals including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)

contributes to sustainable forest management, and that (c) effective participation of all relevant stakeholders within countries could enhance the implementation of sustainable forest management,

1. *Urges* countries to integrate the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and the outcomes of its sessions on social and cultural aspects of forests in national forest programmes, policies and strategies for sustainable forest management;

2. *Urges* countries, within their priorities and capacities, to integrate sustainable forest management into their overall national poverty eradication and development strategies, including through their national forest programmes and processes or their equivalent, consistent with their international obligations;

3. *Invites* countries, consistent with their international obligations, to consider the evaluation, where appropriate, of the social and cultural impact of the implementation of their national forest programmes and strategies, taking into account the need for flexibility to respond to local situations;

4. *Urges* the international community, including donors, to provide financial and technical support to developing countries to enhance their human and institutional capacities in the implementation of sustainable forest management, including on social and cultural aspects;

5. *Encourages* countries to promote the role of private-sector investment for sustainable forest management that takes into account social and cultural aspects of forests, consistent with countries' international obligations;

6. *Invites* members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support, upon request, the initiatives of developing countries to integrate social and cultural aspects of forests in their national forest programmes, policies and strategies;

7. *Urges* countries, in accordance with their national legislation, to foster greater involvement and effective participation of their relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, particularly women and youth, in the development, decision-making, implementation and practice of sustainable forest management;

8. *Encourages* countries, as appropriate, to explore options for the decentralization of decision-making on sustainable forest management, including through sharing experience and lessons learned, as a possible means of effectively addressing social and cultural questions.

Resolution 4/3
Forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting: criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Taking note of the views exchanged by countries and major groups at its fourth session on the related subjects of forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions, of the report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, and of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management,

Highlighting a number of lessons learned through the exchange of experience, namely, that (a) forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting are not ends in themselves but a means to facilitate informed decision-making, and many countries are using or considering use of criteria and indicators to monitor and assess forest conditions and trends and progress towards sustainable forest management, including through implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action, that (b) criteria and indicators have contributed to a better understanding of sustainable forest management, improved forest policies, programmes, practices and information, stakeholder involvement and partnerships and enhanced collaboration among countries, that (c) despite progress made, many countries lack capacity for forest-related inventory, monitoring, assessment and reporting, and enhanced domestic and external financial and technical resources, collaboration at the regional levels and among criteria and indicators processes, cross-sectoral coordination and research are needed for that purpose, and that (d) national forest-related reporting to international fora is placing a heavy burden on countries and needs to be streamlined, and further harmonization of forest-related definitions and terms is also desirable to clarify reporting requests and minimize inconsistencies in information provided,

1. *Calls upon* the donor community, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and other international and regional organizations to continue to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition, at their request, in capacity-building for the collection, processing and analysing, storage and dissemination of forest-related information, and for monitoring, assessment and reporting, including the adoption or implementation of criteria and indicators, on a voluntary basis in accordance with national priorities and conditions, through the provision of financial resources, technical assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technology and know-how;

2. *Invites* Partnership members, other international and regional organizations and bilateral partners to help countries, upon request, to make better use of existing information and resources and strengthen their criteria and indicators processes in the early stages of adoption or implementation;

3. *Welcomes* the Global Environment Facility operational programme on sustainable land management which includes sustainable forest management and identifies as eligible activities, inter alia, forest monitoring and assessment and implementation of criteria and indicators, and encourages member States to submit project proposals under this programme;

4. *Encourages* countries to include forests and forest-related monitoring and assessment in national development plans and poverty reduction strategy papers where they exist, which could enhance opportunities for international cooperation;

5. *Encourages* member States to invite relevant government bodies and non-government stakeholders to participate in the further development and implementation of criteria and indicators at the national and subnational levels;

6. *Acknowledges* the following thematic elements of sustainable forest management, which are drawn from the criteria identified by existing criteria and indicators processes and offer a reference framework for sustainable forest management:

1. Extent of forest resources.

2. Biological diversity.

3. Forest health and vitality.

4. Productive functions of forest resources.

5. Protective functions of forest resources.

6. Socio-economic functions.

7. Legal, policy and institutional framework.

and further acknowledges that member States may identify specific environmental and other forest-related aspects within the above thematic elements for consideration as criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, consistent with national priorities and conditions;

7. *Invites* countries and criteria and indicators processes to consider those elements in the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;

8. *Encourages* countries, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other participating organizations to strengthen support to the global forest resources assessment and enhance its linkages to existing criteria and indicators processes in order to improve the information base for monitoring, assessment and reporting on sustainable forest management;

9. *Encourages* Partnership members to continue to work on streamlining voluntary national forest-related reporting to international forums in order to reduce duplication and reporting burdens, particularly on developing countries, and continue to make information from voluntary national reports to international forums readily accessible;

10. *Invites* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, other Partnership members and countries to enhance efforts to harmonize forest-related definitions in order to facilitate national progress towards sustainable forest management, clarify reporting requests, minimize inconsistencies in information provided and reduce reporting burdens, and urges member States to support that work, including by convening expert consultations;

11. *Encourages* member States, regional and subregional organizations and existing criteria and indicators processes to strengthen and facilitate regional and subregional cooperation, as appropriate, on monitoring, assessment and reporting, by sharing experience and know-how through such means as joint meetings and workshops, making publications available in other languages, electronic communication and the development of web sites;

12. *Encourages* member States to establish or further enhance internal coordination among national focal points of forest-related international forums regarding forest-related reporting, and also urges member States that have not done so to identify a national focal point for the Forum by 1 July 2004;

13. *Encourages* member States to urge governing bodies of Partnership members to better coordinate the schedule of national forest-related reporting to

allow for better management by countries in the collection, analysis and compilation of information and consultations with stakeholders;

14. *Invites* member States to consider the use of criteria and indicators to help develop and monitor national forest programmes or other policy frameworks;

15. *Invites* member States that are not associated with a criteria and indicators process to consider joining one, and therefore invites regional and international criteria and indicators processes to assist, upon request, such member States in becoming involved;

16. *Encourages* countries and Partnership members, consistent with their mandates, to continue to carry out research on forest management-related indicators, giving special attention to those difficult to monitor and assess;

17. *Invites* the governing bodies of Partnership members to utilize, to the extent possible, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management when developing forest-related indicators for their own purposes;

18. *Invites* member States to consider incorporating the concepts of sustainable forest management, monitoring, assessment and reporting, and criteria and indicators, where appropriate, in educational curricula.

Resolution 4/4
Process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Recalling the relevant provisions for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests as contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 and decision 2003/299, and Forum resolutions 1/1 and 2/3,

1. *Recommends* that the preparations for the review should be open, transparent and comprehensive in scope to allow for informed decisions at its fifth session on the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests;

2. *Requests* its secretariat, consistent with its resolution 2/3, to transmit to member States, Partnership members and other relevant organizations and forest-related processes, by 30 July 2004, the following:

(a) Guidelines for reports on implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action;

(b) The questionnaire contained in the annex to the present resolution, which is based on the specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests as contained in paragraph 4 of Forum resolution 2/3. Respondents, as appropriate, may wish to select activities related to their experience. The degree of influence of such selections shall not form a comparative assessment in the final synthesis report of the Secretary-General;

(c) Baseline information, developed in cooperation with Partnership members, relevant to the specific criteria, compiled from existing information, taking into account the work of the relevant ad hoc expert groups;

3. *Invites* member States to submit to its secretariat, by 31 October 2004, in accordance with its resolution 2/3, voluntarily and within their capacities, the following:

(a) A report on the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action;

(b) A response to the questionnaire mentioned above;

4. *Invites* Partnership members and other relevant organizations and forest-related processes to submit, by 30 September 2004, where appropriate, against the specific criteria, and within their mandate:

(a) A report on the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action;

(b) A response to the questionnaire mentioned in paragraph 2 (a) above;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, well in advance of its fifth session, a synthesis report based on information provided in response to paragraph 3 and 4 above;

6. *Requests* its secretariat, in cooperation with Partnership members and criteria and indicators processes, to prepare a global overview of progress towards sustainable forest management based on existing sources of information, including national reports, the forest resources assessment and the criteria and indicators processes, as a contribution to discussions at its fifth session.

Annex

Voluntary questionnaire to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Specific criterion for review: (a) (i) (etc.)					
Remark/synthesis report with illustrative examples:[a]					
Role of the international arrangement on forests:[b]					
Overall assessment of the international arrangement on forests	None	Limited	Moderate	High	Not applicable
Do you quantify this criterion? Answer if appropriate.					
Quantifiable benchmarks (e.g., goals, criteria and indicators)					
Assessment of the international arrangement on forests according to components[c]	None	Limited	Moderate	High	Not applicable

[a] Additional information can be attached to this questionnaire.

[b] Place an X in the appropriate box.

[c] In accordance with paragraph 2 (b) above, please give an appraisal of the international arrangement on forests according to its different components, as appropriate, such as: Forum sessions; Forum decisions/resolutions; panel discussions at Forum sessions: country- and organization-led initiatives; reports of ad hoc expert groups; Partnership-initiated activities; contacts at Forum sessions; actions by the Forum secretariat; or multi-stakeholder dialogues.

C. Decisions of the Forum brought to the attention of the Council

3. The following decisions adopted by the Forum are brought to the attention of the Council:

Decision 4/1
Accreditation of intergovernmental organizations

The United Nations Forum on Forests decided to extend an invitation to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to participate in its deliberations.

Decision 4/2
Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies

The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Reaffirming that the issues of finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies are cross-cutting, interlinked and essential for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and in view of the need for financial assistance and technology transfer in those countries,

Welcoming the work of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies and taking note of its report, which will also serve as an input to the work of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests, and also noting the report of the Brazzaville global workshop on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building for sustainable forest management, as well as the views exchanged and experience shared by countries at its fourth session, given that both the above-mentioned reports contain a wide range of recommendations which could serve as a reference for promoting future actions by member States, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and other relevant organizations,

1. *Encourages* member States, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members, within their respective mandates, and other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, bodies and processes, to consider and take concrete action on the recommendations of the report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies, as appropriate;

2. *Decides* to give further consideration in its programme of work to the issues of finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including the recommendations of the Expert Group.

Decision 4/3
Documents considered by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fourth session

The United Nations Forum on Forests takes note of documents E/CN.18/2004/3, 4 and Add.1-5 and E/CN.18/2004/6-14.

Chapter II
Status of the secretariat

1. The Forum considered agenda item 3 at its 2nd and 4th meetings, on 3 and 4 May 2004. It had before it a note by the Secretariat (E/CN.18/2004/3).

2. At the 2nd meeting, on 3 May, the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum made an introductory statement.

3. At the 4th meeting, on 4 May, a statement was made by the representative of Ireland (on behalf of the European Union).

Chapter III

Implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the plan of action of the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. The Forum considered agenda item 4 at its 4th and 10th meetings, on 4 and 14 May 2004, and at meetings of its working groups. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the following documents:

(a) Reports of the Secretary-General (E/CN.18/2004/7-11);

(b) Letter dated 5 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland and the Chargé d'affaires of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (E/CN.18/2004/15)

2. At its 4th meeting, on 4 May 2004, the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum made a presentation of forest trends based on national reports to the Forum.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Canada, Guatemala, the United States of America, Malaysia, Congo, Chile, India, Benin, New Zealand, Nigeria, Germany, El Salvador, Philippines, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mexico, Fiji and Algeria.

Action taken by the Forum

Forest-related scientific knowledge

4. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Vice-Chairman of the Forum and the Chairman of Working Group I, Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa), reported on the outcome of negotiations held under his chairmanship and introduced a draft resolution entitled "Forest-related scientific knowledge", which was contained in an informal paper.

5. At the same meeting, the Forum adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. B, resolution 4/1).

Social and cultural aspects of forests

6. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Vice-Chairman of the Forum and Chairman of Working Group I, Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa), reported on the outcome of negotiations held under his chairmanship and introduced a draft resolution entitled "Social and cultural aspects of forests", which was contained in an informal paper.

7. At the same meeting, following statements by the representatives of Norway, Canada and Qatar (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), the Forum adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. B, resolution 4/2).

Forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting: criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

8. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Vice-Chairperson of the Forum and Chairperson of Working Group II, Stephaine Caswell (United States of America), reported on the outcome of negotiations held under her chairmanship and introduced a draft resolution entitled "Forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting: criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management", which was contained in an informal paper.

9. At the same meeting, the Forum adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. B, resolution 4/3).

Chapter IV
Common items for each session

1. The Forum held a general discussion on agenda item 5 at its 4th to 10th meetings, on 4 to 6, 11 and 14 May, and at meetings of its working groups. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting (E/CN.18/2004/2);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General on the multi-stakeholder dialogue, transmitting discussion papers contributed by major groups (E/CN.18/2004/4 and Add.1-6);

(c) Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies (E/CN.18/2004/5);

(d) Note by the Secretariat on the progress in the preparation for the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests (E/CN.18/2004/6);

(e) Note by the Secretariat on the proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (E/CN.18/2004/12);

(f) Note by the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination (E/CN.18/2004/13);

(g) Information document on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1).

A. Multi-stakeholder dialogue

2. The Forum held its multi-stakeholder dialogue at its 8th meeting, on 6 May, and at meetings of its working groups.

3. At the 8th meeting, on 6 May, the Chairman opened the multi-stakeholder dialogue and made a statement.

4. At the same meeting, the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum introduced the discussion papers contributed by major groups (E/CN.18/2004/4 and Add.1-6).

5. At the same meeting, Mr. Christian Mersmann served as Moderator and made introductory remarks.

6. At the same meeting, presentations were made by the representatives of the following major groups: indigenous people, women, children and youth, workers and trade unions, farmers and small forest landowners, non-governmental organizations, scientific and technological communities, and business and industry.

7. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Guatemala, Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), the Gambia, Algeria, Brazil,

Finland, Russian Federation, Nigeria, Germany, Indonesia, Sweden, Pakistan, Kenya, Canada and Ecuador.

8. Also at the same meeting, the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) made a statement.

9. At the same meeting, the representative of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and the representative of the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, two intergovernmental organizations, also made statements.

Action taken by the Forum

10. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May 2004, the Forum had before it a summary of the multi-stakeholder dialogue prepared by the Chairman (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.2), which read as follows:

> 1. The multi-stakeholder[a] dialogue at the fourth session of the Forum was held in two parts. The dialogue started with a general policy discussion on the social and cultural aspects of forests and traditional forest-related knowledge, followed by an implementation-focused exchange on the topics of capacity-building and partnerships. The present summary highlights the policy recommendations made during those sessions. Although there were many common issues of concern, major groups shared a diverse set of perspectives and opinions about the priorities and means of meeting those goals. The very rich set of experiences with implementation presented during the dialogue will be reflected in a separate document on the Forum web site.
>
> **Social and cultural aspects of forests**
>
> 2. There was a common understanding among stakeholders and representatives of Governments that for millions of people around the world forests are an integral part of social and cultural traditions and heritage. That relationship is particularly important for indigenous peoples, for whom forests are a vital source of knowledge and spirituality and whose cultural identity is inextricably linked with the forests they inhabit. The need for improved analysis and explanation of the contributions of forests and uses of forest resources for social and economic goals was emphasized by several groups.
>
> 3. It was pointed out that forest policy should take on the very difficult task of integrating — rather than merely balancing — social, environmental and economic priorities in order to achieve sustainability. A number of groups stressed the importance of the non-commercial benefits that forests provide, the need for a better understanding of the complex relationships between people and forests, and the need to include forest-dependent communities in the forest management decision-making process. Efforts aimed at decentralization are a valuable first step in that regard, but people in rural areas will also require extensive capacity-building to enable their effective participation.

[a] The major groups participating in the multi-stakeholder dialogue were: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, workers and trade union, business and industry, science and technological communities, and farmers and small forest landowners.

4. The importance of joint responsibility in formulating and implementing forest policy was highlighted by stakeholders and representatives of Governments. It was pointed out that a stronger managerial role of forest-dependent communities was conducive to the conservation and sustainable use of forests. This extends to local workers who benefit from direct employment opportunities with decent and safe working conditions. The role of business was also highlighted as the provider of advanced technology that can ensure sustainable forest use in accordance with local priorities.

5. When indigenous peoples and local communities are denied benefits from the use of the forests, however, illegal logging often becomes a survival strategy. Illegal logging policies should, therefore, consider the impacts on local communities and their sources of livelihoods.

6. It was noted that market forces do not always take into account the needs of people, and policies that would provide social services are thus required to mitigate market failures. It was also pointed out that a more holistic vision is required to see how policies affecting one sector may indirectly affect the forest sector.

7. Indigenous peoples called for the recognition of their right to self-determination and self-governance and for an end to the appropriation of forests and the allocation of timber concessions without their knowledge or consent. Other groups also expressed concern for secure property rights, clear tenure systems, and fair and balanced sharing of benefits.

8. Several groups argued that some social norms need to be changed, particularly the stereotypical perception of women as dependent and supplementary caretakers, which inhibits the recognition of their crucial role in ensuring food security and sound environmental management. The socio-economic development of women is the key to achieving the goal of poverty alleviation. It was argued that women must be given a greater role in forest management and decision-making at all levels and across institutions.

9. It was also stated that in order to ensure sustainable forest management across generations and to increase understanding of forests as a critical resource, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on education through the integration of social and cultural aspects of forests in kindergarten, school and university curricula.

Traditional forest-related knowledge

10. Several participants argued that although there are a number of IPF/IFF proposals for action with regard to traditional forest knowledge, three main obstacles hinder implementation: a lack of recognition of such knowledge and its potential benefits, a lack of effective means of engaging indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making, and a lack of legal protection in terms of land tenure and property rights.

11. As with social and cultural aspects, traditional forest-related knowledge is inextricably linked to the land and control of its management and use for all local stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, small landowners, youth and women. The loss of such knowledge is a direct result of loss of access to

traditional lands. Clear property rights and secure land tenure are necessary for the continued use and maintenance of traditional forest-related knowledge.

12. The erosion of oral tradition of knowledge-sharing and the lack of systemic recording methods has led to a continuing loss of ancestral knowledge that could benefit modern medicine and forest management practices. The reticence to share such knowledge was attributed by some to the alarming trend of appropriation by commercial and private entities of intellectual property without the consent of, or due and equitable compensation for, traditional knowledge holders. Policies ensuring equal and fair sharing of benefits are therefore critical. The need to promote capacity-building of indigenous peoples and local communities for the development of culturally appropriate methods of storing and sharing traditional forest-related knowledge was stressed. The recognition of the living nature of such knowledge is essential. Such knowledge should be incorporated into formal education systems and shared through industry training programmes in order to ensure cultural sensitivity as well as preservation and use.

13. Women have a distinct body of forest-related knowledge that is linked to their different societal roles and responsibilities. They are custodians of inter-generational traditional knowledge that ought to be treated as intellectual property.

14. The vital role that traditional forest-related knowledge plays in sustainable forest management should be incorporated into national and local forest management plans and practices through the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, local communities and stakeholders at all levels of decision-making.

Capacity-building

15. The importance of capacity-building in strengthening the ability of stakeholders to effectively participate and contribute to sustainable forest management was discussed. A cross-sectoral approach, including the critical components of education, assistance with creation of associations and networks, and access to both information and institutions, was deemed essential for a well developed capacity-building programme. Proper capacity-building ensures that each of the stakeholders can fulfil their roles in ensuring sustainable management of forests. A first step in ensuring effective dialogue is the creation of a common understanding of relevant concepts, terms and definitions.

16. It was noted that as land and resource ownership is increasingly in the hands of local authorities, rural and indigenous communities and individuals, needs for capacity-building are increasing. In particular, information that can be accessed and understood by the majority of people and indigenous peoples in particular, and an effective means of public dissemination of knowledge and policy information, are an important means of increasing local capacity to make informed decisions. Information on decisions taken at all levels should be made available to local communities, including indigenous peoples, in local languages and in a timely manner.

17. Associations and networks contribute to sustainable forest management in a number of ways. They provide a voice for stakeholders and a resource-efficient way of participating in decision-making processes; they transmit decisions and information effectively from decision-making bodies to stakeholders; they provide internal training and capacity-building in work skills and other forms of education; they provide a means of sharing resource burdens for achieving common goals; and they ensure safe and decent working conditions as well as fair labour practices. Stakeholders and some representatives of Governments agreed that such association-building should be encouraged and supported at all levels.

18. Joint research programmes were regarded as an effective means of both minimizing duplication of efforts and increasing training and educational opportunities for scientists and students. Collaborative Partnership on Forests members were encouraged to work with regional scientific research networks on such activities.

19. Greater collaboration between Forum and Partnership members and regional and subregional processes and organizations was called for in all aspects of capacity-building.

20. Holistic education and extension programmes were viewed as essential by both major groups and representatives of Governments. These should include training in all aspects of cultivation and marketing and go beyond simple technology transfer. Such programmes should rather be designed as unified participatory rural development programmes. The role of business and industry partners in training and related on-the-ground forest management was also noted.

21. In order to ensure long-term implementation of decisions taken at the international level, lessons learned through the international dialogue must be incorporated into the formal education system. Curricula should be reformed to include such concepts as community-based forest management and ecosystem management, and must include skills training in participatory planning, implementation, coordination, networking, negotiation and conflict management. Stakeholders also cited the need for further capacity-building in third party monitoring and assessment. Practitioner's guides were cited as useful tools for capacity-building.

22. Capacity-building programmes are especially rare for youth in developing countries and should be enhanced. Institutional barriers to such activities must be removed and funding increased if this group is to be well educated on forestry issues.

23. Institutional capacity-building towards the integration of women into decision-making was cited as a way of ensuring that development programmes take due account of women's roles in poverty alleviation and sustainable forest management. A greater effort should therefore be undertaken to include women in all aspects of development and decision-making.

24. Financial constraints were identified as the main obstacle to creating and implementing capacity-building programmes on both national and local levels.

Partnerships

25. An extensive body of experience with partnerships at all levels and among various groups and Governments was shared. Such partnerships were recognized as instrumental in promoting sustainable forest management and in addressing priority issues on illegal logging and good governance. At the same time, NGOs expressed their deep concern regarding the type II partnerships introduced by the World Summit on Sustainable Development process, emphasizing that they are often established and managed without the adequate participation of civil society.

26. The importance of involving and facilitating the participation of major groups in forest partnerships at the national, regional and global levels was stressed. National forest programmes, model forest networks and joint forest and community-based management processes were considered effective approaches for partnership building and conducive to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, especially at the local level.

27. It was noted that effective partnerships require time and clear agreements on the basis of mutual trust and jointly defined goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities and should be reflective of the will of respective constituencies. Credibility, transparency, accountability, effective communication, including documentation and dissemination of the process, political commitment and the sharing of research and scientific data, are among the necessary elements to build effective partnerships. The importance of monitoring and evaluation schemes as well as reporting standards to help assess progress and impacts was emphasized. Application of independent third-party observers was also recommended as a helpful way of increasing transparency and accountability.

28. Challenges were also identified. Some partnerships tend to exclude stakeholders, such as youth and women, and often become labelled as social gatherings rather than as effective catalysts for positive change. Lack of information access, education, communication networks, as well as adequate human capacity and financial resources also hamper the ability of various stakeholders to become involved on an equal footing and in maintaining constant participation. Indigenous peoples emphasized that partnerships must be established with full respect for their rights, including their land and territorial rights, and provided examples of timber concessions appropriated by Governments without their informed consent.

29. The reluctance of Governments to apply social indicators to measure the health of communities, including changes in the forest landscape, was identified as a limitation, especially for indigenous people. Stakeholders recommended the integration of social indicators into forest management and planning, specifically to measure the health of communities and their forests.

30. Stakeholders and Governments highlighted the importance of further collaboration between the public sector and major groups, particularly forest professionals and women forest professionals, especially as regards networks and communication systems. It was recognized that greater dialogues enhances decision-making processes. Governments were called upon to work with

stakeholders to undertake joint action planning and implementation at all levels.

B. Enhanced cooperation

11. At the 4th meeting on 4 May 2004, the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum introduced the report of the Secretary-General and made a presentation on sustainable forest management and the ecosystem approach.

12. At the same meeting, presentations were made by the Chairman of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

13. At the 5th meeting, on 4 May 2004, presentations were made by the representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the representative of the Global Environment Facility.

14. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Brazil, Pakistan, Norway, the United States of America, Guatemala, Congo, Mexico, Nicaragua, China, Algeria and New Zealand.

15. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of FAO.

16. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the International Tropical Timber Organization and of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, two intergovernmental organizations.

17. Also at the same meeting, the representative of the Global Environment Facility responded to questions.

Country experiences and lessons learned

Panel discussion on the theme "The role of forests in achieving broader development goals"

18. The Forum held a panel discussion on the theme "The role of forests in achieving broader development goals" at its 3rd meeting, on 3 May.

19. At the same meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs made introductory remarks and the Coordinator and head of the Forum secretariat acted as Moderator.

20. At the same meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Ole Henrik Magga, Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; Tony Simmons, Principal Tree Scientist, International Center for Research in Agro Forestry (ICRAF), Fredy Arnoldo Molina Sanchinel, Director of the Coordinating Indigenous and Farmers Association on Community Agro Forestry in Central America, and Inviolada Chingayanrara, Coordinator for Africa of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers.

21. Also at the same meeting, the following delegations made comments: Australia, Costa Rica, the United States of America, Guatemala, Brazil, Benin, the United Kingdom, India, Germany, Gabon and Peru.

22. At the same meeting, the representative of the Northern Office of the World Rainforest Movement also participated.

Action taken by the Forum

23. At the 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Forum, had before it a summary of the discussion prepared by the Chairman (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.3), which read as follows:

1. Forests and trees play a critical role in supporting the livelihoods of people, particularly the world's poor. Forest resources directly contribute to the livelihoods of 90 per cent of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty and who depend on forests to enrich their soil, provide nutrition for their livestock and protect their water supply. For these people, forests are a source of food, energy, shelter, medicine, commerce and spiritual well-being. Finding means of managing forests in a more sustainable way is thus crucial for achieving development goals and providing secure livelihoods to the majority of the world's poor.

2. To provide a basis for exploring the relationship between forests and livelihoods and the way they can contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and as a contribution to the forthcoming Economic and Social Council high-level segment on the implementation of major international agreements, the Forum secretariat organized a panel discussion on the role of forests in achieving broader development goals.

3. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs stressed three critical areas of sustainable forest management with clear linkages and potential for contributing to achieving broader development goals, namely, the need for coherent and predictable forest policies; the importance of efficient and effective land tenure systems and access to forest resources; and governance, compliance and attention to conflicts in forest areas.

4. The Chairman of the Forum pointed out that many indigenous peoples are forest dwellers and depend on forests for not only economic livelihood but community and spiritual well-being. He argued that poverty has a cultural context and that for most indigenous people poverty is not defined as a lack of access to the cash economy but as a denial of human rights and access to traditional lands and a way of life. Indigenous peoples contribute a great deal to sustainable use and management of forests and their methods actually increase biological diversity. He sighted clear property rights and effective land-tenure systems as crucial for ensuring forest health. He further called for development programmes to take into account the distinct cultural perspectives and needs of indigenous communities.

5. Mr. Simons gave an overview of the role that forests and trees play in the livelihoods of the poor as well as the direct way that trees can be used to achieve each of the Millennium Development Goals. He stated that agro-forestry has the potential to provide for household needs, contribute to income, allow time and resources for education, provide food and health remedies, and contribute to environmental sustainability. He argued that market-driven agro-forestry can provide the basis for a strong partnership for development.

6. Mr. Molina provided examples of on the ground activities in capacity-building and empowering women in forest-dependent communities, and gave insightful examples from his own community in Guatemala. He stated that although indigenous and peasant communities are often considered incapable of sustainably and productively managing forests, community-based forest management in Central America by those populations has restored lands, reduced forest fires and contributed tremendously to the local and national economy. He stressed the importance of engaging and empowering local communities as an effective way of tackling poverty and creating sustainable livelihoods.

7. Ms. Chingayanrara discussed the effects of globalization on local wood workers and concerns related to the increasing growing informal economy, with a particular focus on the African region. She stated that the increase in forest privatization has often led to a reduction of formal employment opportunities and access to forest resources for local communities. This leads to a growth in the informal economy of forest-related products and thus an increase in unsafe working conditions. Members of local communities that are forced to travel to urban or other areas to find alternative employment are also increasingly exposed to HIV/AIDS. She highlighted the importance of policies that expand the capabilities of individuals and communities of forest-dependent peoples to diversify their income base, and stressed the need for descent and safe working conditions in accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions.

8. Both the panel presentations and the ensuing discussion highlighted several important policy recommendations, including:

- Using the Forum process to ensure the use of sustainable management of forests as a tool for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and ensuring that the potential contribution of forests and forest resources to all nine of the Goals is taken into account at both the national and international levels.
- Increased resource mobilization for the achievement of the Goals, particularly for the use of forests in that regard.
- Ensuring that poverty reduction strategy papers and other national strategies take a holistic view of economic and social development that addresses the important role of forests in providing for poverty reduction and sustaining livelihoods. This includes the engagement of local and indigenous communities in the process of poverty reduction strategy papers development and implementation.
- Linking national forest programmes with poverty reduction strategy papers processes to ensure that forest and poverty issues are considered jointly and that the indirect effects of economic policies in other sectors on forests and forest dependent communities is taken into consideration.
- Ensuring the support for and implementation of ILO conventions in the development of national forest programmes and in all aspects of forestry.
- Ensuring clear property rights and land tenure systems.

- Promotion and support of community-based forest management as a means of creating incentives for the sustainable use of forest resources and providing a platform for sustaining livelihoods.

C. Panel discussion on implementation with a focus on Africa

24. At its 6th meeting, on 5 May 2004, the Forum held a panel discussion on implementation with a focus on Africa and heard a statement by the Chairman.

25. At the same meeting, presentations were made by the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum; Gregoire Nkeoua, Director of Forestry, Ministry of Forestry of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Director of Forest Resources of FAO; Ruth Mubiru, Director, Uganda Tree Planting Movement; Tobais Takavarasha, Agriculture Adviser, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); Frank Kufakwandi, Principal Forestry Officer, African Development Bank; Samuel Nguiffo, Director for Environment and Development, Cameroon; and Yemi Katerere, Assistant Director-General of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). Judith Mbula Bahemuka, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, acted as Moderator.

26. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), Malawi (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Uganda, Canada, Ecuador, Gambia, Senegal, France, Germany, Madagascar and Indonesia, as well as by the representative of CIFOR, an intergovernmental organization.

27. At its 7th meeting, on 5 May, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, South Africa, Algeria, Central African Republic, Nigeria, China, Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Action taken by the Forum

28. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Forum had before it a summary of the discussion prepared by the Chairman (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.1), which read as follows:

Introduction

1. Sustainable forest management is vital in providing social and economic support to rural African communities and contributing to food security and poverty reduction. The global concern on the declining state of tropical forests and its impact on societal welfare are equally reflected in discussions relating to African forests, especially in view of the rapid rate of forest loss in the region and its multifarious consequences.

2. In response to the ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2003 with regard to the special needs of Africa, the fourth session of the Forum held a panel discussion focusing on sustainable forest management in Africa. The outcome of the panel discussion on Africa will also contribute to the high-level and coordination segment of the Council scheduled for July 2004.

The Panel

3. Judith Mbula Bahemuka, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, moderated the discussion. The panel was composed as follows: Yemi Katerere, Assistant Director General of CIFOR; Frank Kufakwandi, Principal Forestry Officer, African Development Bank; Ruth Mubiru, Director, Uganda Tree Planting Movement; Samuel Nguiffo, Director, Center for Environment and Development, Cameroon; Gregoire Nkeoua, Director of Forests, Ministry of Forestry and Environment of the Republic of the Congo; El-Hadji Sene, Director, Forest Resources, FAO; Tobais Takavarasha, Agriculture Adviser, NEPAD.

4. Gregoire Nkeoua discussed sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin and the importance of regional cooperation mechanisms. Challenges facing sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin included environmental preservation, cross-sectoral convergence and the mobilization of resources. Financing of the convergence plan for the Congo Basin had been crucial for the success of the Congo Basin partnership.

5. El-Hadji Sene presented the results of the fourteenth session of African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and highlights from the FAO forestry outlook study for Africa.

6. Ruth Mubiru spoke on the Uganda Women's Tree Planting Movement, an indigenous organization that focuses on environmental protection in Africa. She identified the lack of security of land tenure, low literacy levels, poverty and HIV/AIDS as the main obstacles to effective participation by women in tree-planting efforts.

7. Tobais Takavarasha described the report of NEPAD on the comprehensive Africa agriculture programme action plan. The latter incorporates elements of forests and forestry.

8. Frank Kufakwandi highlighted factors hindering Africa's economic progress, which were impeding a number of African countries from achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

9. Samuel Nguiffo discussed the challenges of law enforcement and illegal forest activities in Cameroon, which has experienced undesirable exploitation of its forests with no effective administrative capacity to monitor timber production; no rules and mechanisms exist to prohibit illegal logging. The deployment of independent observers and the use of persuasive sanctions would improve knowledge and curtail illegal forest activities.

10. Yemi Katerere stated that international processes do not serve Africa's interests. Key challenges to achieving sustainable forest management in Africa include identifying forestry priorities and mobilizing means of implementation; and the lack of significant external private and public investments needed to complement African commitments. Forestry issues in Africa were less about forestry and more about macroeconomic policies, land-use planning and land management.

Conclusion

11. The panel discussion, which highlighted the role of forests in rural development and poverty eradication in Africa, was seen as an important milestone in the Forum process. Sustainable forest management was considered as an integral part of overall national, subregional and regional development strategies in Africa. The discussion underscored the importance of sharing knowledge and lessons learned in achieving sustainable forest management and in implementing the plan of action of the Forum; the IPF/IFF proposals for action; the strengthening of partnerships to promote sustainable forest management in Africa; and the promotion of a stronger African participation in the international forest dialogue. The panel also called for concerted action by African Governments and other stakeholders in implementing sustainable forest management.

12. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the speakers' open and candid presentations, and welcomed the increased participation of African governments and stakeholders in the fourth session of the Forum. They called for further donor support in that respect.

13. Delegates highlighted the need to link forestry to poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. They noted the challenges caused by conflict over the control of forest resources, and welcomed the Africa forest law enforcement and governance process.

Recommendations

14. Recommendations towards sustainable forest management in Africa included:

- Improving scientific knowledge of African forests and management practices.
- The integration, formalization, utilization and protection of indigenous knowledge.
- Improved local-level participation and involvement in decision-making and project implementation, in particular by women.
- The adoption of a rights-based approach to sustainable forest management and the devolution of benefits to those managing forests.
- Focused efforts to incorporate forests in national development and poverty reduction strategies and on developing and implementing national forest programmes in African countries.
- Development of forest product industry and trade, as well as improving market access for African forest products and capacity-building.
- Strengthening the financing of regional and especially subregional cooperation in sustainable forest management.

15. It was also suggested that the Forum, with the support of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) could:

- Develop funding mechanisms for women's groups in Africa involved in poverty eradication schemes, such as tree planting.

- Support the holding of a global meeting in Africa on women involved in tree growing before the fifth session of the Forum.

D. Panel discussion on implementation with a focus on small island developing States

29. At its 9th meeting, on 11 May 2004, the Forum held a panel discussion on implementation with a focus on small island developing States and heard a statement by the Chairman.

30. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum.

31. Also at the same meeting, presentations were made by Rafael Francisco de Moya Pons, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic; Rolph Payet, Principal Secretary, Department of Environment of the Seychelles; Eugene Hendrik, Director, Ministry of Agriculture of Ireland; Graham Watkins, Acting Director General, Iwokrama Project, Guyana; Simione Rokolaqa, Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations in New York; Mette Loyche Wilkie, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO; and the Director of the Division on Sustainable Development of the Department on Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, who acted as Moderator of the panel discussion.

32. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of New Zealand, Qatar, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Mauritius, Grenada, Australia, the United States of America, Guyana, Jamaica, Indonesia, Canada and Nicaragua.

Action taken by the Forum

33. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Forum had before it a summary of the discussion prepared by the Chairman (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.4), which read as follows:

Introduction

1. In an effort to contribute to the preparations of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which will undertake a 10-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, at its fourth session the Forum held a panel discussion on the role of forests and trees outside forests in small island developing States. The panel discussed the realities of forests and forestry in small island developing States, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered in promoting sustainable forest management in islands and low-lying coastal States.

2. Although forests and sustainable management of forests were not dealt with as separate chapters in the Programme of Action, there is much recognition of the importance of forests for the sustainable development of small island developing States. Forests and trees outside forests play a significant role in the preservation of biological diversity, food security, soil conservation, wood and non-wood forest products, water management, coastal

protection and the diversification of economic development in island ecosystems, among others.

Panel

3. The Director of the Division on Sustainable Development moderated the discussion. The panel was composed of Rafael Francisco de Moya Pons, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic; Mette L. Wilkie, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO; Graham Watkins, Acting Director, Iwokrama Project, Guyana; Simione Rokolaqa, Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations; Rolph Payet, Principal Secretary, Department of Environment of the Seychelles; and Eugene Hendrick, Director, Ministry of Agriculture, Ireland.

4. Ms. Wilkie provided a general overview of forests and forestry in small island developing States and noted that no internationally accepted definition exists for small island developing States. Forests in small island developing States, as a group, make up less than 1 per cent of global forests; nevertheless, the small island developing States group is well endowed with forests. Despite the large variations between small island developing States, they share commonalities, constraints and opportunities in sustainable forest management. Their role is of extreme importance both globally and locally, for numerous functions and services.

5. Dr. Watkins described the promotion of sustainable human development through forestry in low-lying coastal States. He presented the lessons learned of the Iwokrama project, and noted that managing tropical rainforests entails well trained people and information; higher initial investment; a larger return over time; benefits spread across businesses and communities; people with vested interest in sustainable forest management, among other factors. The Iwokrama partnership for development includes local groups, national institutions and international organizations. Collaboration with local communities allows for the sharing of benefits and responsibilities, as well as a better understanding of the human ecosystem, traditional knowledge and capacity-building.

6. Dr. Francisco de Moya Pons presented the daily realities of managing forests at the national level in a shared island. He presented the experiences of the Dominican Republic in the past four years concerning forests, and the role that forests play in water management. Policies were applied to create national parks for the conservation of forests, as well as to recuperate and restore large river basins. Other policies were created to develop sustainable forest industries and to promote investments in the forest sector.

7. Mr. Payet discussed the importance of sustainable forest management in achieving sustainable human development and how the Seychelles is developing its eco-tourism sector. He described the management implications and lessons learned in ecosystem activities, including the packaging of eco-tourism products, training requirements, community-based involvement, financing and infrastructure.

8. Dr. Hendrick explained how sustainable forest management could positively affect climate change in islands in both developed and developing

regions. Taking the case of Ireland, he described Ireland's afforestation programme in 1924-2003 and the forest cover composition and growth dynamics. The potential contribution of forests in reaching Ireland's annual emission reduction target was explained. It was noted that sustainable forest management has a potential role to play in climate change policy.

9. Mr. Rokolaqa presented the social, economic, cultural and spiritual importance of forests and trees outside forests in the South Pacific. He emphasized the significance of cultural and intellectual heritage, the value of traditional knowledge and the social and spiritual meaning of trees. The social significance of forests was further described, with particular emphasis on the role of forests in protection against natural calamities, the value of shade, soil improvements, livelihoods, wood materials and commercial timber, medicinal value and food resources.

Conclusion

10. Forests provide important local and global benefits of social, cultural, environmental and economic scale, covering local needs, such as domestic livelihoods in small island developing States and the prevention of land erosion to global serves in contributing to climate change and the reduction of emissions. Small island developing States forests also provide ideal pilot sites for the practical applications of sustainable forest management.

11. Sustainable forest management plays a significant role in contributing to the sustainable development of islands and low-lying coastal States. Unique opportunities exist in applying sustainable forest management in small island developing States. Innovative approaches and ideas, together with political will, partnerships and regional collaboration will help trigger further actions on forests in small island developing States.

12. Following panel presentations, delegates expressed appreciation to the Forum for organizing the panel discussion and the panellists for their insightful presentations. They noted the low levels of representation at the fourth session of small island developing States from the Caribbean and Pacific area. They recognized the special developmental challenges associated with small island developing States. The discussion noted that eco-tourism had the potential to play a significant role in the protection of forests and the conservation of biodiversity. It was also noted that afforestation and forest management, when allied to sustainable forest management, have a role to play in setting climate-change policy.

Recommendation

13. To achieve sustainable forest management in small island developing States, the following recommendations were presented for the Forum to:

- Facilitate, through the Forum secretariat, the setting of a special forestry network for small island developing States to communicate information and share experience and best practices to help adopt actions on sustainable forest management which have proven to be successful elsewhere.

- Develop partnerships on sustainable forest management with similar small island developing States.
- Mobilize international support through finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to assist small island developing States initiatives geared towards sustainable forest management and to address gaps in implementation.
- Improve scientific knowledge, research and information dissemination on small island developing States forests, through regional networks and cooperation.
- Develop new ways to ensure sustainability of small island developing States forests and to apply sustainable forest management practices.
- Further promote regional and subregional cooperation in sustainable forest management to help small island developing States to identify key regional priorities and new initiatives for applying sustainable forest management.

14. It was also suggested that, with the support of the members of the Partnership and regional development banks, the Forum may wish to address the special needs of the Caribbean small island developing States, inviting the Caribbean Development Bank to serve as a regional implementation agency for the application of the Global Environment Facility to ensure sustainable forest management for Caribbean small island developing States.

E. Intersessional work

34. At the 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum introduced a note by the Secretariat on the progress in the preparation for the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests (E/CN.18/2004/6).

Action taken by the Forum

Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies

35. At the 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Vice-Chairman of the Forum and Chairman Working Group I, George Talbot (Guyana), reported on the outcome of negotiations held under his chairmanship and introduced a draft decision entitled "Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies", which was contained in an informal paper.

36. At the same meeting, the Forum adopted the draft decision (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/2).

37. After the adoption of the draft decision, a statement was made by the representative of New Zealand.

Proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

38. At the 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Forum had before it a draft resolution entitled "Proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests", submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Forum and Chairman of Working Group II, I. Gede Ngurah Swajaya (Indonesia), which was contained in an informal paper.

39. At the same meeting, following statements by the representatives of Argentina (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Japan, Mexico, Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), and Canada, the Forum adopted the draft resolution, as amended (see chap. I, sect. B, resolution 4/4).

Chapter V
Other matters

1. The Forum discussed agenda item 6 at its 10th meeting, on 14 May 2004.

2. At the same meeting, the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum introduced the note by the Secretary-General on the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007 (document E/CN.18/2004/14).

Chapter VI
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests held its fourth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 6 June 2003 and from 3 to 14 May 2004. The Forum held 14 plenary meetings (1st to 14th).

2. The 2nd meeting of the fourth session, which was held on 3 May 2004, was opened by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

3. At the same meeting, the Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum made a statement.

4. Also at the same meeting, the Chairman of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests made a statement.

5. At the same meeting, the representative of Switzerland made a statement.

6. Also, at the same meeting, on 3 May, statements were made by the representatives of Qatar (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), Indonesia, the Russian Federation, South Africa, China, Congo, Australia, Japan, Uganda, Switzerland and Guatemala.

7. At the 3rd meeting, on 3 May, statements were made by the representatives of Croatia, Cuba, India and New Zealand.

8. At the 4th meeting, on 4 May, statements were made by the representatives of Benin, the Republic of Korea, Guyana, the Central African Republic, Lesotho, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania.

9. At the same meeting, the representative of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, an intergovernmental organization, made a statement.

B. Attendance

10. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, the Forum is composed of all States Members of the United Nations and States members of the specialized agencies with full and equal participation. Representatives of 25 non-governmental organizations spanning the eight major groups were in attendance (for the list of participants, see E/CN.18/2004/INF.2).

C. Election of officers

11. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 6 June 2003 and 3 May 2004, the Forum elected the following officers of its fourth session:

Chairman:
Yuriy N. Isakov (Russian Federation)

Vice-Chair:
Stephanie Caswell (United States of America)
I. Gede Ngurah Swajaya (Indonesia)
George Talbot (Guyana)

Vice-Chair-cum Rapporteur:
Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa)

D. Adoption of the agenda

12. At its 2nd meeting, on 3 May 2004, the Forum adopted the following provisional agenda for its fourth session:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Status of the secretariat.
4. Implementation of the proposal for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the plan of action of the United Nations Forum on Forests:
   (a) Progress in implementation:
      (i) Traditional forest-related knowledge;
      (ii) Forest-related scientific knowledge;
      (iii) Social and cultural aspects of forests;
      (iv) Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions;
      (v) Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management;
   (b) Means of implementation (finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity-building for sustainable forest management) as a cross-cutting issue, in the context of sub-items 4 (a) (i)-(v).
5. Common items for each session:
   (a) Multi-stakeholder dialogue;
   (b) Enhanced cooperation;
   (c) Country experience and lessons learned;
   (d) Emerging issues relevant to country implementation;
   (e) Intersessional work;
   (f) Monitoring, assessment and reporting;
   (g) Promoting public participation;
   (h) National forest programmes;

(i) Trade;

(j) Enabling environment.

6. Other matters.

7. Dates and venue of the fifth session of the Forum.

8. Provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Forum.

9. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fourth session.

E. Documentation

13. The documents before the Forum at its fourth session are listed in the annex to the present report.

F. Establishment of working groups and designation of their chairmen

14. At its 2nd meeting, on 3 May, the Forum established two working groups. On the proposal of the Chairman, agenda items and sub-items were allocated to the two working groups to be chaired by Vice-Chairs, as follows:

Working Group I (Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa))

4 (a) (i) Traditional forest-related knowledge

4 (a) (ii) Forest-related scientific knowledge

4 (a) (iii) Social and cultural aspects of forests

Working Group I (George Talbot (Guyana))

5 (a) Multi-stakeholder dialogue (partnerships)[a]

5 (e) Intersessional work (Ad Hoc Expert Groups on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies)

Working Group II (Stephanie Caswell (United States of America))

4 (a) (iv) Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

4 (a) (v) Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

5 (a) Multi-stakeholder dialogue (capacity-building)[a]

5 (e) Intersessional work (Ad Hoc Expert Group on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting)

Working Group II (I. Gede Ngurah Swadjan (Indonesia))

5 (b) Enhanced cooperation

5 (e) Intersessional work (proposal for review process)

[a] It was agreed that item 5 (a), Multi-stakeholder dialogue (partnerships) would be chaired by Ms. Caswell and item 5 (a), Multi-stakeholder dialogue (capacity-building) would be chaired by Mr. Talbot.

G. Participation of intergovernmental organizations

15. At its 2nd meeting, in accordance with rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Forum extended an invitation to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to participate in its deliberations (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/1).

H. Date and venue for the fifth session

16. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Forum was reminded that, in its decision 2003/272, the Economic and Social Council had decided that the fifth session of the Forum would be held in New York from 16 to 27 May 2005.

I. Provisional agenda for the fifth session

17. At its 10th meeting, on 14 May, the Forum decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council for adoption the draft provisional agenda for its fifth session, as contained in document E/CN.18/2004/L.2 (see chap. I, sect. A, draft decision I).

J. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fourth session

18. At the 10th meeting, on 14 May 2004, the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the Forum on its fourth session (E/CN.18/2004/L.1).

19. At the same meeting, the Forum adopted the draft report and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize it with the support of the Secretariat.

Annex

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.18/2004/1	2	Annotated provisional agenda
E/CN.18/2004/2	5 (e)	Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting
E/CN.18/2004/3	3	Note by the Secretariat on the status of the Forum secretariat
E/CN.18/2004/4 and Add.1-6	5 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting discussion papers contributed by major groups
E/CN.18/2004/5	5 (e)	Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technology
E/CN.18/2004/6	5 (e)	Note by the Secretariat on progress in the preparation for the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests
E/CN.18/2004/7	4 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on traditional forest-related knowledge
E/CN.18/2004/8	4 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on social and cultural aspects of forests
E/CN.18/2004/9	4 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on forest-related scientific knowledge
E/CN.18/2004/10	4 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on monitoring, assessment and reporting concepts, terminology and definitions
E/CN.18/2004/11	4 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management
E/CN.18/2004/12	5 (e)	Note by the Secretariat proposing a process to facilitate the carrying out of the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the Forum
E/CN.18/2004/13	5 (b)	Note by the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination
E/CN.18/2004/14	6	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2006-2007
E/CN.18/2004/15	4 (a)	Letter dated 5 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland and the Chargé d'affaires of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General
E/CN.18/2004/16	2	Note by the Secretariat on the participation of intergovernmental organizations in the deliberations of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.18/2004/L.1	9	Draft report
E/CN.18/2004/INF.1	5 (b)	Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework, 2004
E/CN.18/2004/CRP.1-4	5 (c)	Chairmen's summaries of discussion

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